TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
BULLETIN

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NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting will be held in the Royal Society Room, Tasmanian Museum, on Thursday, July 18th, at 7.45.p.m.

SPEAKER

Mr. Marcus Hurburgh, who will tell us about his visit to Port Davey.

NEXT OUTING

Date - Saturday July 20th.
Meet - The Prince
Time - 10.a.m.
Transport - Private
Object - A Mystery Point - to - Point Trail -
Round trip about 60 km (or about 40 miles)
Birding - Botanising - Growing Australian Plants - etc - etc - etc.
Bring your Thermos etc and dress according to the weather.

THAT FUNGUS - Phytophthora cinnamoni

As there have been several articles on this fungus in the papers lately, it might be of interes to read some information gleaned from "The Bird Observer" (Victoria).

These points apply to the mainland which is (we think) warmer than Tasmania and so is more susceptible to the growth of this plant and tree killer. What harm does it do?

Many fungi feed on dead plant or animal material and are of tremendous importance because they break down this material and recycle the nutrients. Other fungi live as parasites on live plants and animals and cause disease. The Cinnamon Fungus lives in the soil and invades, then feeds on, the fine roots of many different kinds of plant, causing root-rot. Unlike most fungal pests, which

usually have only one or a few types of host. this fungus is known to attack 728 species of plant, including more than 400 native Australian species. It is the ability to invade and kill such a wide range of plants which makes the organism of so much more concern than other introduced fungal pests.

The fine roots of a plant enable it to extract moisture and nutrients from the soil. Infected plants have difficultyin absorbing enough water through their remaining roots, particularly in summertime when the soil is dry, and so they may die.

Once the disease becomes established in a tract of bushland it kills susceptible plants, leaving only the resistant ones. Hence in some localities forests have been converted to grassland (most grasses are resistant) The severity of the attack will obviously depend on when the most abundant species in an area are resistant or susceptible, as well as drainage, water supply, climate and soil type.

The disease is particularly severe in areas which have periods of wetting and drying out. Infected sites can be rehabilitated with tolerant species, but in the short term the original vegetation cannot be restored.

How does it spread?

In Victoria all fresh outbreaks have been traced to road-building and other earthmoving activities. Soil carried on vehicles, bulldozers, around potted shrubs and even on hikers' boots can transmit the disease for many miles.

Although infected plants may not begin to show symptoms until dry weather comes, the fungus grows and produces its spores most rapidly in wet or waterlogged soils and so its spread is favoured by high rainfall (particularly summer rainfall with high temperatures) Dry weather won't kill it. Spores are carried in water, so disease spreads down gullies and creeks. Spores are not transmitted through the air or on foliage.

What can I do?

1. All plants are protected in National Parks.

A plant taken back to the suburbs from a diseased site could spell a strange death to prized garden shrubs. Moreover, any soil thrown out en route in another part

of the forest could be responsible for destruction of untold acres.
2. When cars are driven on unformed roads, they frighten animals, damage vegetation, pollute the air, spread weeds, and cause soil erosion. Now there is an added reason for motorists and bike riders to remain on prepared tracks - a vehicle driven off-road could leave a trail of destruction behind it.
3. Even hikers and birdwatchers should be careful. The chances of spreading the disease from dry, firm tracks are remote, but those tramping in boggy conditions could easily transfer the disease along with the mud which cakes on their boots.
4. You can tell other people about it. Only when citizens are aware of the fungus and the problems which it poses can proper precautions be taken against it.

..... and some points from the Annual Report of the Victorian Plant Research Institute.....1972-3.
.... One approach to the control is to obtain information on the relative susceptibility of native plants, and in poorly drained soils, to grow only those which have some resistance. Therefore they continue to test many of the native plants and have lists of plants showing their resistance qualities. They have made a survey of many of the Melbourne nurseries, only two of which had the fungus - but they are continuing with this.
With this continued testing of suitable types of native plants, gardeners will be able to select the more resistant species for their native gardens.

....We, in Tasmania, need not get into a panic over this but we should keep our eyes open in case we unwittingly or irresponsibly help in some way to spread the infection.

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Subscriptions * * * *

ARE YOU FINANCIAL FOR 1974????????

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CONSERVATION

Now that this Club is a Group Member of the Australian Conservation Foundation, we have received an envelope full of literature.

Constitution of the A.C.F.
List and Prices of their available publications.
Annual Report 1972-3.
Newsletters: April, and May.
"Habitat" June, 1973; September 1973; March 1974.
and a little enclosed card.

"The President and Council of the Australian Conservation Foundation welcome you as a new member and appreciate your support and interest."

"Habitat" is an illustrated magazine of Australia-wide interest and includes an educational supplement with ideas for school projects.

Look for these papers on the table at the next meeting.

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LAST OUTING

There was a good turn-up of members (and cars) on on Saturday June 22nd - in spite of grey skies.

The party followed the Southern Outlet Road to where it joins the Sandfly road just near Longley. We got out here and had a look around, then went on to Judbury, going through Gamelagh, and then along the Russell River Road. Lunch was had by the roadside and after lunch we followed that road as far as the Bridge. Here we parked the cars and walked along the road up the hill.

The surprise find of the day was a rare

Pomaderris elachophylla

which Curtis says has been found only near Longley. We found one bush only, just by the roadside. It was about two metres high and was covered with tiny buds. Its leaves were only a few mm long.

Look for a specimen of this on the table.

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